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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: HELMAND MP KILLED BY AN IED

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Christopher Dell for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY. On March 19 an IED explosion killed Helmand MP Dhad Mohammad Khan (DMK) as his motorcade traveled through Kandahar Province en route to Lashkar Gah, Helmand Province. His killing sparked a parliamentary hearing on the Afghan government's efforts to protect MPs and to investigate and prosecute those responsible for these types of incidents. Resulting from this hearing, security ministry and parliamentary leadership will meet and devise a specific plan to address these issues.

12. (S/NF) DMK had served as a member of the National Assembly's Lower House since 2005. A former Helmand National Directorate of Security (NDS) Chief, DMK was closely linked to Helmand strongman Sher Mohammad Akhundzada (SMA) and allegedly heavily involved in narcotics production and smuggling. DMK did not frequent Parliament but had recently increased his visibility in Helmand, attending high profile public events at the invitation of Helmand Governor Mangal, likely as part of Mangal's effort to jump-start reconciliation efforts in the province.

13. (C) Parliament summoned NDS, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defense, and Attorney General's Office leadership to brief the Lower House on DMK's death, investigation results from other security incidents involving MPs, and precautions taken to ensure MPs' safety. During the March 25 hearing, Minister of Interior Atmar described the chain of events surrounding DMK's March 19 death: DMK was traveling in a multi-vehicle convoy through Kandahar en route to Helmand on the morning of March 19. Two men activated a remote control IED as DMK's car swerved off the road to avoid a hole, killing DMK and two companions.

14. (C) A member of DMK's security detail, traveling in a separate vehicle, shot one of the attackers. The second attacker picked up his comrade's body and drove off on a motorcycle. Atmar said authorities have apprehended and are questioning an insurgent known to have placed IEDs in the area, but have not found either of the men who activated the remote control. (It is unknown if the attacker shot by DMK's security detail survived). Atmar noted DMK was accompanied by a private security detail, rather than his government-provided security. The road where DMK died is extremely dangerous, averaging one to two explosions per day, including two explosions earlier in the morning of DMK's death, Atmar added.

15. (C) NDS Chief Saleh said NDS did not have much to add to Atmar's comprehensive summary of DMK's death and focused his comments on the broader issue of protecting civilians, giving a very neutral depiction of the deaths stemming from a recent U.S. military operation in Kunduz Province. Saleh blamed Pakistan's military and intelligence services' lack of commitment to fighting extremism as contributing to the violence Afghans face. Minister of Defense Wardak spoke briefly about the signed agreement between coalition forces and the Afghan government to coordinate to reduce civilian casualties and emphasized his ministry's readiness to protect MPs. The Attorney General's Office representative mentioned his office's successful prosecution of three participants in the April 2008 assassination attempt on President Karzai.

16. (C) MPs questioned Atmar, Saleh, and the other officials

vigorously, focusing their criticisms on continued civilian casualties, house searches, and the failure to successfully prosecute and then incarcerate insurgents and other criminals. The session lasted five hours with Lower House leadership closing the hearing by inviting the security officials to meet with the Lower House committee heads to resolve outstanding questions.

¶7. (SBU) The seat vacated by DMK will remain unfilled until the 2010 parliamentary election. Media reports noted 10 MPs have been killed since 2005, with the 2007 Baghlan Province suicide attack and related violence killing six and the 2008 Kabul assassination attempt on President Karzai killing one.

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